various options other than price control to keep up life saving drugs affordable;

(b) if so, whether this task force was set up following the finalisation of trade margins by the Sandhu Committee set up earlier;

(c) if so, whether task force suggested to amend the target set under the Price Control Order, 1998 to cap trade margins of drugs which are not under the price control; and

(d) if so, by what time any legislation in this regard is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a)ATask Force has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Principal Advisor (PP), Planning Commission to explore various options other than price control for achieving the objective of making available life-saving drugs at reasonable prices.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of reply to (b), as above.

National Policy on Petrochemicals

3894. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Policy on Petrochemicals is under consideration of Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that through the proposed policy, Government are going to set up Plastic Development Council for modernization and upgradation of technology, to boost exports, recycling etc;

(c) whether Government would think of setting up of Plastic Technology Upgradation Fund on the lines of Technology Upgradation Fund for Textiles; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALSAND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes Sir. A national Policy on Petrochemicals is being finalized by this Department.

(b) to (d) The Policy measures being proposed in the National Policy are to be first discussed with other Departments/Ministries, before the adoption of the Policy by the Cabinet.

New Drug Policy Norms

3895. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new drug pricing criteria has been recommended by a Government Committee, which in its interim report had suggested a lid on retail margins and stronger monitoring of drugs outside price control;

(b) if so, by what time this Committee is likely to submit its final report; and

(c) by what time Government is likely to announce the new drug policy norms?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) A Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (PI) was constituted to examine the span of price control (including trade margin) in the light of National Common Minimum Programme and the observations of the Supreme Court in SLP NO (C) 3668/2003 and to suggest measures for fulfilling the objective of National Common Minimum Programme to ensure the availability of life saving drugs at reasonable prices. This Committee has submitted its interim report to the Government. The Committee has recommended, *inter-alia,* intensive monitoring on the prices of all those drugs out of the selected basket (National List of Essential Medicines, 2003) which are not under price control, ceilings on trade margins of drugs, a system of price negotiations for the new patented drugs, special schemes for people below poverty line, introduction of 1 Rajasthan Model of Life Line Fluid Stores (hospital pharmacy stores run by Medicare Societies) for bulk purchase of drugs directly from manufacturer and selling them at reduced prices, compounding of offences under the Essential Commodities Act, establishment of DPCO cells in all States on the model of Karnataka, price negotiations at the time of launching of a new patented drug, efforts to increase public awareness, wide publicity to